BRUEDERFELD

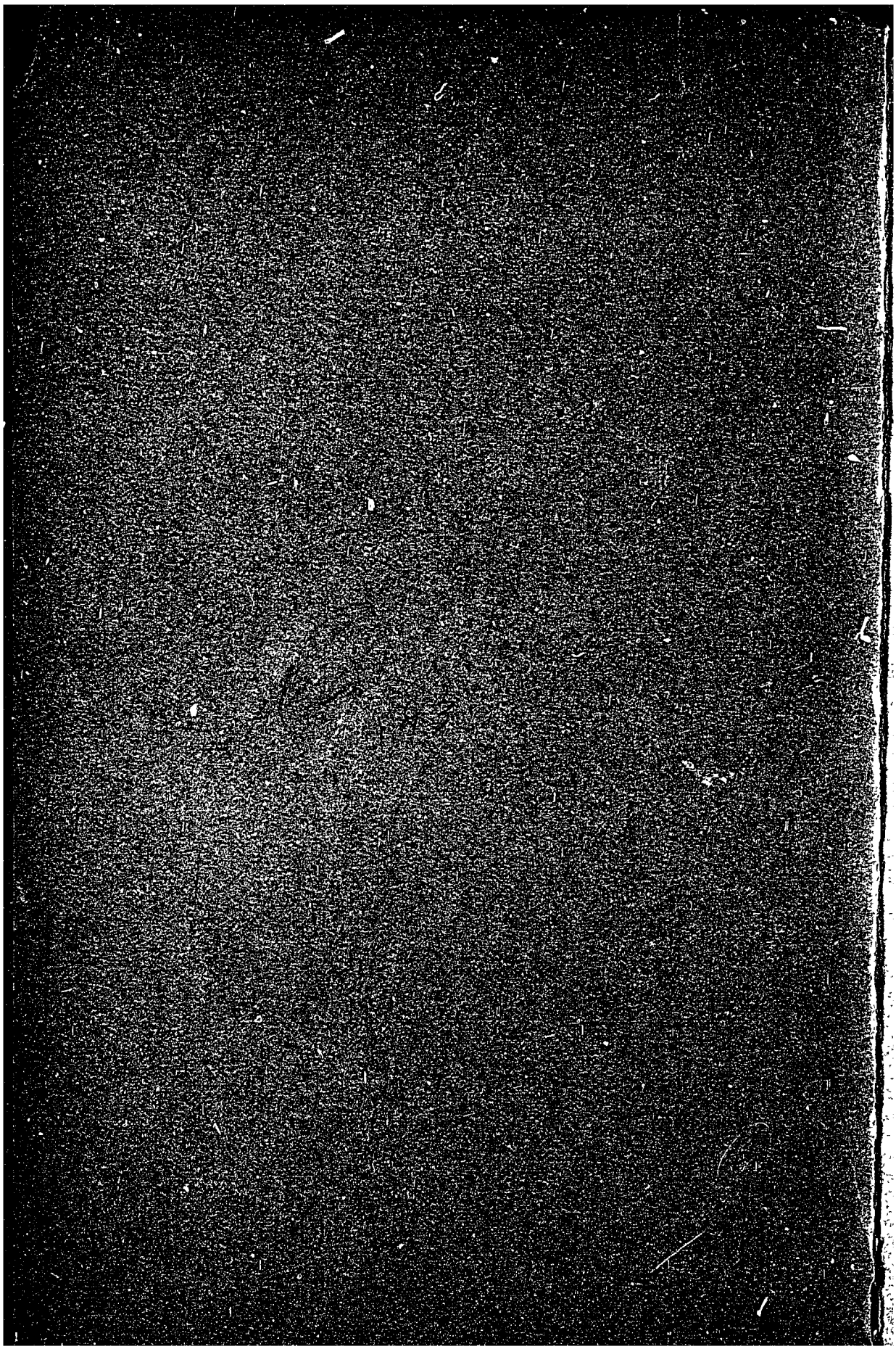
AND

BRUEDERHEIM.

MORAVIAN SETTLEMENTS

IN

ALBERTA, CANADA.



Bruederfeld and Bruederheim.

MORAVIAN SETTLEMENTS OF GERMAN RUSSIANS IN ALBERTA, CANADA.

EXTRACTS

FROM

THE REPORT OF AN OFFICIAL VISITATION,

November 4 to December 3, 1895,

BY

THE REV. MORRIS W. LEIBERT.

BETHLEHEM, PA.:
MORAVIAN PUBLICATION CONCERN.
1896.

PREFATORY NOTE.

EXCEPTING a few verbal changes, the following account is identical with the extracts from the report as they originally appeared.

Breaks in the narrative, gaps in detail, and fragmentary form are owing to the omission in type of purely personal, or business, or problematical matters which were submitted in the complete manuscript, and of still other facts and incidents that could be conveyed only orally.

First and last, let it be understood that, all other conditions being favorable and fulfilled, the key to the situation—the one essential to be complied with—is controlled colonization.

Published by order of the Provincial Elders' Conference, and of the Provincial Board of Church Extension, containing their action in the case, and supplemented with their call for support, these pages, which, had time permitted, might have been tenfold more voluminous, bear no private impress merely, but have official character.

The object of the pamphlet is to furnish the information and to awaken the interest, which are required to secure means with which to prosecute this effort, and to unite the prayers of the Church for the guidance of the enterprise to a successful issue.

M. W. L.

BRUEDERFELD AND BRUEDERHEIM.

AT the request of my colleagues in the Provincial Elders' Conference and in the Provincial Board of Church Extension, and with the cordial assent of my colleague in the pastorate—my kind associates assuming routine duties reluctantly dropped—I set out on the 4th of November, 1895, for an official inspection of our recently organized work in the Edmonton district, Alberta, Western Canada. It was felt, not only, that personal acquaintance was requisite for an intelligent control of the course of affairs there, it was deemed wise, also, to investigate matters at a season which would give the most correct idea of actual conditions, of present prospects and of possible demands. The item of expense offered a serious drawback, but on mature deliberation was regarded as fully warranted by the exigencies of the case. Thirty days were given to the visitation; of these, three were spent at Winnipeg, two at Edmonton, five at Bruederfeld, five at Bruederheim, and fifteen in travel. Ten interviews were had with Government officials, eight board meetings and church councils and ten public religious services were held, the celebration of the Holy Communion, at each place, being the closing occasion, and thirty calls upon members were

made. Going, the route led by way of Montreal; returning, it lay through St. Paul. The entire distance covered was 5,855 miles.

The problem submitted for solution contained several factors. The first was this: Here is a stream of German emigration proceeding from Russian territory, settling on Canadian soil, claiming the brotherhood of the Moravian Church in the United States—what relationship, holding in ecclesiastical and international law, can be established between us? The second was this: These colonists, relinquishing their homes because of their attachment to the Moravian Church, many of them assisted by the Dominion Government and by Transportation Companies because of their Moravian name, some reaching their free farms empty-handed and as Moravians becoming objects of charity among other denominations—what obligations, as members of the same household of faith, rest upon us? A third was this: Our Church authorities having long corresponded with them, counseled them, recognized them, approved of their organization, received their signatures to sanctioned rules and regulations, could now not ignore or disregard them, nor could they allow them without knowledge of their characters, motives, ability or loyalty to drift into the fold hap-hazard, expend money in their behalf at random, and after the lapse of perhaps a decade realize that the project was ill advised, and ought to be abandoned, if only such a thing were possible—what definite action, what decisive step shall now be taken by our Boards? And a fourth was this:

What reasons exist in Russia for this emigration, and is it likely to continue or to increase? What inducements in Canada are attracting the current of colonization thither, and are they sound and permanent? What forces have guided the movement hitherto—and what power shall direct events hereafter?

Let us find answers to these latter questions, before we enter upon an examination of the earlier queries.

More than a century ago there began to flow from Germany to Poland, out of sections of country long inhabited and over-peopled into a region whose name indicates its special fitness for agriculture, a tide of emigration encouraged by concessions as liberal as it lay within the power of papist princes to grant to Protestant peasants. In turn, and for like reasons, under the advocacy of adherents of the Greek Church, but more especially after the abolition of serfdom which left vast tracts without laborers, a similar movement set in from the crowded portions of Russian Poland toward its neighboring, heavily timbered Province of Volhynia —a word implying the prosperity of its people. Land which owing to political misfortunes had been lying there untilled for generations was leased to these German colonists from Poland at advantageous rates on twelve year terms. Populous villages speedily sprang up where forests had stood, and immense sections of this Russian Province became almost exclusively German. At the expiration of the first twelve years, the leases for lands brought under cultivation and improved, and containing the results of the settlers' thrift, were

renewable at a smart advance, with prospects for purchase still in view. The course of colonization from Poland, Prussia and Silesia continued, and with the increased agricultural population there arose a demand for mechanics and artisans and for the establishment of industries. This drew into the on-flowing, ever-widening current members of the Moravian Diaspora in those countries whence the exodus was proceeding.

About 1815 spiritual experiences were made by many of the German colonists in Poland, through the instrumentality of several earnest workers of the Moravian Church, which developed into a deep religious awakening. By the blessing of the Lord upon the devoted labors of several consecrated lay brethren a revival of the inner life was fostered in a great number of German towns throughout Poland, from which, for the last thirty years or more, awakened families emigrated to the adjacent district of Volhynia. With their temporal belongings and worldly goods, they took also their newness of life, the spiritual aims and the religious activities to which they had become habituated; yet they never constituted, while settled in Volhynia, a regular charge in our Diaspora field. But as in Poland, one of the original Provinces of the Moravian Church, there were several centers of Diaspora activity under the management and supervision of our Church, so there arose in Volhynia a number of village groups in which members of the Diaspora, engaged in secular pursuits, but under no official appointment, and without support of either Conference or Synod, sought to infuse that life into the ossified belief of their countrymen, which by

the grace of God had been implanted in them; in which laudable and singularly successful effort they were cheered through occasional visits by leaders of the Polish Diaspora work.

With the increase of the number benefited, with the growth of the groups, with the introduction of regular meetings, with the circulation of Moravian literature and with the establishment of the Moravian type of life and character, came dissatisfaction with their merely nominal church membership, and the desire to form congregations of the Moravian Church. This resulted, in 1884, in the formal severance of a large number of families from the German Established Church, and their organization into two Moravian congregations; one at Kremenka, the other at Schadura. The machinations of the clergy of the State Church, a single pastor of which in that country frequently has sole spiritual supervision of from 40,000 to 60,000 souls, soon caused the heavy hand of the Government to be laid on the churches, which resulted in the abandonment of the first named effort after a few months' trial, and which led to the emigration to Brazil of many families of the other, in 1886. At the same time, inquiries were being made into the possibility of colonizing others in a body in some part of the United States. This project proved futile.

In the meanwhile, too, the Russian Government was scheming at reducing the strength of the German population, for reasons purely political. Great difficulties had always attended the purchase by German colonists of the lands cultivated and rendered profitable by them. Now, unless the Greek faith is accepted it is impossible

to secure title to any real estate. Indeed, upon the expiration of his twelve year lease, a German may now only renew it after adoption of the Russian religion. He may lease in some distant region, thickly wooded and thinly peopled, he may settle in some Asiatic Province, or emigrate to foreign parts, but as a German, or as an evangelical Christian, independent, self-respecting, citizenship in Volhynia expires with his present twelve years' lease. Political plotting and religious bigotry clashing with the love of liberty and with living faith are thus seen to be the expelling forces, fomenting emigration. All history teaches that a reversal need never be expected, that reconciliation cannot come. The alternatives presented are simply these: either degradation or emigration. Our interest lies with those who choose the latter.

By Governments having territory to develop, by corporations having lands to sell, by companies having passage by sail or rail to offer, the countries of Europe, crushed by the heel of the oppressor, are flooded with that peculiar advertising literature which puts people on the move in one or another direction. England is rivaling the United States in its tenders of free farms and low fares. Thus the district of Alberta, in the Dominion of Canada, and particularly the Edmonton region, was brought to the notice of many of those Moravian Germans in Russia who had come to realize that Volhynia could not much longer remain their home. During my trip, I accumulated a satchelful of maps and pamphlets, documents and general literature bearing

upon the district visited; as I traveled, I interviewed men occupying high official stations, and old residents of experience and intelligence. My investigation led to pleasant acquaintance and profitable conversation with various emigration officers of the Dominion and of the Railway, with buyers of pelt from Indians and trappers, with a writer for the Reviews, a gentleman of wide culture and intimate knowledge of the entire Hudson Bay territory, with Dr. Bryce, ex-President of the Manitoba Presbyterian College and of the Manitoba Historical Society, who has been a resident of Winnipeg from the time that it had 400 people to the present day when its population touches 40,000, with the Rev. G. A. Turk, pastor of a Methodist church, and other ministers who have had years of contact with colonists, with Mr. T. E. Morden, city editor of the Manitoba *Free Press*, who takes a deep interest in the welfare of the once Russian, now Alberta Moravians, with Mr. R. A. Ruttan, Agent of Government lands, with Mr. H. H. Smith, Commissioner of all Dominion lands west of Ontario, with Mr. L. A. Hamilton, the Land Commissioner of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and with Governor Mackintosh, who from his capital, Regina, administers the affairs of the enormous North-West Territories of Canada, lying west and north of the Province of Manitoba—organized by partial subdivision into the four great provisional districts of Saskatchewan, Assiniboia, Alberta and Athabasca—and I am in correspondence with the Department of the Interior at Ottawa. My visit took me out upon the fields, across prairies and through thicket and copse, into the cabins

of colonists recently arrived, and over the premises of settlers well established. It is from sources such as these, and from facts obtained through personal observation, that I form whatever opinions I see fit to express regarding life and law in the land toward which a Moravian tide from Volhynia has set.

For families from central or northern Europe who are obliged to break up their homes and seek new, there is neither climate nor soil in America which will suit them better than that of Alberta. For people coming with reduced resources, there is no section which contains more favorable conditions for beginning fairly, and progressing surely, and prospering permanently, than that fertile belt which extends, in irregular lines, northwest from the Red River to the Rocky Mountains, three hundred miles wide and a thousand miles long. Lying altogether within these borders, Alberta is bounded on the north by latitude 55.7, on the south by a part of Montana, on the west by the summit of the Rocky Mountains and the 120th degree longitude. It extends east and west some 300 miles, north and south some 500 miles. It includes within its 107,700 square miles a great variety of forest and stream, of grazing and agricultural land. In it are comprised some 45,000,000 acres of the most productive soil on the continent and some of America's best deposits of coal, minerals and petroleum.

To most persons outside of it this district is nearly if not altogether synonymous with our traditional notions about Alaska or Siberia, while the fact of the matter is that its geological formation and its geographical location are such that, although during the Winter

30° below zero (Fahr.) was once reached, November 28, 1883, the cold is not severely felt on account of the dryness of the atmosphere, and whenever the temperature is low, great calms prevail, and blizzards are not known. By the 10th of April the days are warm and bright, and seeding is well under way. By the 10th of May growth commences vigorously and continues with great rapidity. Haying begins about the middle of July, and harvest about the end of August. On the high lands frosts are not experienced until the middle of September; in the valleys or flats they may be expected a week or two earlier; but they are local, and do not disturb the older settlers. During May there is no rain. June and July are showery. Summer weather corresponds to that in the State of New York. August, September and October are dry months, giving every opportunity for fall ploughing and other outdoor occupation. The rainfall in Summer is plentiful. The snowfall in Winter is light. Snow flurries come in the middle of November. Sleighing is seldom good until December. The winter months are most enjoyable. There are few days when the farmer needs to muffle up inconveniently. The climate is most healthful. No disease peculiar to the country is known. The death rate is exceedingly low.

The soil is generally a jet black, sandy loam two to three feet in depth, with a subsoil of marly clay. Wheat threshes from 40 to 45, oats from 75 to 100, barley from 50 to 70 bushels to the acre; and 400 to 500 bushels of potatoes are readily yielded by the acre —other root crops correspondingly. Cattle and colts

roam without shelter for weeks during the Winter. Grazing is good the year round. Wood for building and fuel abounds. Soft coal is dug along many of the river banks and ridges. Water may be found anywhere at a depth of from eight to thirty feet. As the Summer and Fall advance a rapid succession of wild flowers, and a great variety of berries and of game, add beauty to the prairie and furnish delicacies for the table.

Taxes are scarcely felt. There is no obstacle to prosperity. There is no oppression of the poor. The appearance of the country, as you traverse it, is that of a natural park. Yet it is no paradise. Still, if people must leave their present homes and seek others, there is no land where hard work and intelligent attention to conditions will sooner secure a comfortable living, and in process of time a competence, than the district of Alberta. All this is attested by the carloads of settlers constantly coming over from the States, and by the shiploads of colonists steadily streaming in from Europe. The trial of the territory is completed. There is no longer any question as to its suitability for successful mixed farming and its accompanying prosperity. For the intending emigrant, the question to decide is now only one of precedence in occupancy, of still securing favorable terms, and of locating most advantageously.

Individual influence alone has hitherto been advocating the emigration of our brethren from Volhynia to Alberta. Uncertainty and hesitancy, indecision and hopelessness, have mingled with the urgent invitations sent out to those who have nothing yonder to keep them and here everything to draw them. If, then, it

is imperative to leave Russia and desirable to settle in Canada, the project must henceforth receive the recognition and enjoy the supervision which may be provided only by official action.

Having thus reached the field which is being entered, we must treat of the initial experiences, the state and the prospects of those who have transferred their homes, their citizenship and their church thither.

When, early in 1894, word was had in Volhynia that it would be possible to secure that relief and that chance for which they longed in Alberta, a number of families prepared to dispose of their possessions. A few of them had titles to their farms and buildings, others could sell only personal belongings. Ready buyers were waiting to be approached. The accumulations of years of toil and thrift were parted with at a shameful sacrifice. With this money and the few effects that would stand them in good stead on their way and at their destination, the long journey was begun. Some traveled with their private means, others with borrowed funds, and others still with the aid of a government appropriation made by the Dominion. Several days by stage, and several more by train, were spent in reaching the seaport of Libau on the Baltic, four hundred miles distant from Zhitomir in Volhynia. Thence the voyage by way of Liverpool was across the Atlantic to Halifax.

Disembarked, a startling discovery was made. Every one found himself to be but half as well off as he had imagined. The Russian kopek corresponds in size and

value to our cent, the smaller silver coin is likewise of corresponding form and worth. The ruble is a coin of the weight and appearance of our silver dollar. Leaving Volhynia in the fancied possession of $100, or $400, of $1000 or $4000, which sums may represent the amounts, far below the real value, realized from the sale of their properties, the emigrants, when they had exchanged their money, had but $50, or $200, or $500, or $2000, as the case might be, and yet their ruble in Russia had penny for penny the purchasing power of the dollar in America. To this ugly fact is owing much of that tremendous disappointment, discouragement and distress which prevailed among the colonists on their journey across the Dominion, and during the first part of their stay in Alberta. To be caught in the crush created by such circumstances, combined, possibly, with emigration in earlier life from the fatherland, with the endurance of a decade of Polish poverty, with the subsequent experience of another decade of Russian rigor, succeeded finally by immigration to an entirely foreign country, all this is not conducive to any surplus of resources, either of capital or energy. About one half of the number who have thus far come could buy the land they preferred and begin operations at least partially equipped. The other half now here, arrived upon the scene without the means to either crop their land or build themselves a shelter. Some came inadequately acquainted with the necessities and requirements of colonization at isolated points, others came with vague ideas of assistance from the powers that be, while many, of course, came fully prepared for the struggle, but all

had taken the step without the knowledge of any directing Board and under no official oversight or authorized leadership whatsoever. It was at this juncture that the connection of these emigrants with the Moravian Church in the United States began, and it was for these reasons, and others growing out of this state of affairs, that the intervention of our Boards was sought and an investigation inaugurated.

* * * * *

Arrived at Edmonton, Alberta, the center of the region to which this stream of colonization has turned and the field calling for examination was placed in full view. Fort Edmonton, one of the old Hudson's Bay trading posts, around which a fine town, Edmonton, having a population of 1500, has grown up, lies on the north side of the North Saskatchewan River, 195 miles north of Calgary on the Canadian Pacific Railway—nearly 3000 miles from Bethlehem. A branch railroad, completed in 1891, brings the traveler to South Edmonton, not yet incorporated, where are located some emigrant houses, and other buildings common to such a place. The Land Office for the district lies across the river. The towns are situated on bluffs two hundred feet high. Between them in gracefully sweeping curves winds the river, clear as the blue sky overhead, and true to the meaning of the word—swift current—its channel a thousand feet wide. Communication in Summer is by ferries, in Winter by the ice bridge. During the winter season the ice runs swiftly with the current, and the ferries can not be operated, so the traveler crosses in a rowboat handled by a lusty oarsman. South Edmonton lies up stream,

westwardly from Edmonton proper. The two towns are three miles apart on the roads that must be traversed. Both have post offices and banks, hotels and stores, churches and schools, mills and private dwellings and each a newspaper, that serve to dispel all ideas of newness. By the road followed, our upper settlement is distant from South Edmonton in a northeasterly direction about 48 miles, while the lower colony is distant from South Edmonton in a southeasterly direction about 5 miles; hence the distance between the two, Bruederheim the more northerly, and Bruederfeld the more southerly, is upwards of fifty miles.

Having previously, by personal inquiry, located the nearest colony of Russian Moravians on the recently vacated Indian Reserve Papaschase, which is reached over the so-called Hay Lake Trail, I was conveyed thither, together with my luggage, on Wednesday, the 13th of November. As we jogged and jolted along on the farm wagon, following the windings of the trail, now over its smoothly worn old ruts, and again through some stretch of stumps and corduroy, closed around at times by forest and underbrush and a moment later out upon the open prairie, it was evident from the free and unreserved conversation carried on with the brethren who escorted me, that, though the trials and hardships and self-denials were not forgotten nor altogether overcome, so far as things temporal were concerned the brethren in this section had passed through the critical period, but that they were by no means satisfied with present provisions for the soul life, nor with their prospects

of church connection. These latter had furnished them the motive for forsaking old associations, seeking homes distant from their own a third of the globe's circumference. Their willingness at middle life to begin anew the struggle for that material bread which no man can do without, was based entirely on their hunger for that spiritual bread which alone can satisfy forever. There is good land for the plough, and they know that abundant harvests will reward their manual labor, but there is also a deep soul soil—and it is to this that attention is being paid by various denominations. At present services are few, but representatives are on the ground, ready to take what they can get, laying the foundations for the day when the City of Edmonton will be populous, and the adjacent country prosperous. The question is now awaiting our answer: Shall we proceed with the work we have begun, shall we organize and develop our own, our own not by birth, but by choice, and by choice made at a sacrifice, and establish here a center of Moravian Church life and activity? In all my stay and work at Bruederfeld, I observed that the single query calling for reply, which the people wish disposed of before proceeding with the development of their farms, and with the culture of their religious life, is: Shall we have, as we supposed we should when we sold our humble but well-ordered European homes and came into this waste place, shall we have here a real Moravian congregation, and a real Moravian minister? So privileged, we shall forge forward with strong hope; disappointed in this, we must drudge on hopelessly.

The congregation at Bruederfeld was organized June 27, 1895. A set of rules, sanctioned by the Provincial Elders' Conference, were on that day signed and officers elected, as the official records show. In order to become thoroughly acquainted wherever time permitted me to go, I visited fifteen families in their homes. Four business meetings with the official brethren and with the congregation were held, and five religious services were conducted, the latter on Thursday and Saturday evenings, and on Sunday morning, afternoon and evening. Our brethren at Bruederfeld at this time number about twenty families, 50 communicants and 100 souls. Each family is settled on a quarter section, *i. e.*, 160 acres of choice land purchased at an average of $3.25 per acre, payable in ten annual installments. They are compactly located on adjoining farms; each half a mile square, or two miles around; thus being separated only by their own intervening fields, and yet all the way from half a mile to five miles apart.

When first meeting these brethren and sisters amid those surroundings and occupations that everywhere characterize the early settler's life, there was inevitably a certain diffidence, then a brief apology for appearances, then some humorous reference to the plight each had succeeded in placing himself into, then a simple, often wondrously strong expression of Christian faith and confidence in their Lord and Saviour for immediate wants and future blessings—and after that there would follow the most frank and cordial converse on personal matters, as also on the congregation in process of

formation. None could close their eyes to the fact that ample returns had rewarded their labors since their settlement a year and a half, a year, or half a year ago; and that all had occasion to render thanksgiving unto the Lord. After their arrival on the quarter section they had severally selected, the first thing that had to be done was to provide temporary shelter. This was quickly accomplished by cutting poles, and setting them up in the fashion of either a square or circular tent, and covering this frame with brush. Some of these huts still remain. By their side now stand the present dwellings of the settlers, cabins built of logs, either of the round or squared trunk, hewn or sawn, as the builder had time, taste or tools, the crevices chinked with clay. The largest dimensions are 16x24 feet, though not a few are but 12x14 feet. Some of them have a floor and ceiling of board, cut by hand from the spruce in the adjoining woods; others have but a few boards lying loose, others have clay, and still others the plain earth for the floor. When there is a ceiling it is barely high enough to allow one to stand upright. In most cases there is no ceiling, simply the roof poles running from the sides to a slightly higher ridge pole. These were covered with hay, and this again with slabs of sod four inches thick, or with reed or straw thatch. In the center of most of these cabins there is a shallow board-covered excavation slightly suggestive of a grave; this answers temporarily the purposes of a cellar. In most of the cabins there are but two windows, in many only one, each window less than two feet square. Underneath the window at the farthest end stands a table,

on either side of that, in the corners, are the bunks or beds. In a third corner there is room for a stove, alongside of which a spinning wheel may stand, the fourth being reserved for the door, which is hung on wooden hinges and closed with a wooden latch, with the traditional latchstring hanging out. Pulling the string the latch is raised, thumping on the door as it swings into the single room, the visitor is in the presence of the occupants, sometimes two—sometimes twelve. In many of the houses there are no chairs. Stools hewn of plank, a wicker trunk, or a chest, must for the present afford all seating accommodation. On the walls are a few nails for every-day clothing, for a few of the most necessary utensils, and a rack for some spoons and knives and forks, for a few plates and cups and saucers. A rifle may rest upon the rafters; a flail, or some other bit of half-finished, home-made article for use on the fields or in the house, may be stowed on some projecting beam or peg; a lamp and a pile of devotional books may find lodgment upon the other window ledge. In many instances the stable communicates directly with the cabin, there being but one entrance for the two. By day the house is deserted. All are at work upon the fields, cutting sod, burning brush, breaking new land, ploughing, sowing, reaping, digging wells, building additions and extensions, cutting timber for larger stables, gathering material for the decent house whose site and whose arrangement are all in the mind and purpose of the settler, where he will presently *live!*

Up to this time the services have been held at the home of a brother who when he built his house did so

with such occasions in view. He is a fine specimen of the better class of these settlers, an intelligent, sturdy, whole-souled, energetic man of sixty, rejoicing in fifteen years' experience of the second birth. Before the hour appointed he brings from out of doors the round blocks and the rough sawn hemlock planks with which seats for the congregation are improvised. One by one the families assemble. After an hour the house is filled to suffocation. Every seat is taken. All the standing room is occupied. As they cross the threshold, the worshipers fold their hands and bow their heads in prayer. Silently the moments speed until all who may be expected are orderly arranged. A striking, impressive sight it is. Devotion, expectation, are written on every feature. The men are huddled in a heap by themselves, giving the better places to the mothers and the little ones. Remnants of Russian robes are mingled with the prevailing German garb in picturesque profusion, lending to the whole an aspect at once outlandish and decorous. Several can start and carry a tune. Members of a scattered trombone choir, twelve men strong, are among the colonists. A tune need but be indicated by its number and the proper note is instantly struck. All sing. They do it heartily and correctly. Some of our old chorales brought cheer to the hearts, and tears to the eyes of the congregation as our worship progressed. And then there prevailed a responsive touch, that grateful receptivity which ever appeals to the minister, enabling him to throw himself into his work more wholly than can ever be done when it is felt that in many a heart there is not hunger but hardness, in

many another not devoutness but formality, and in many others still not Christian cordiality but cynical criticism. Across furrowed fields whose pitchy loam vies in blackness with the darkness of the moonless, starless night, through thickets in and out of which wind the old Indian footpaths, over new roads in which upturned roots and prostrate trunks interfere sadly with safety and with speed, come the brethren and sisters with their children by their sides and with their babes wrapped in shawls. They are impelled to attend the services provided through stated lay activity or chance ministerial visit, by the spirit that led them from their native villages in a fair and dear land—noble-ruined and priest-ridden—loyalty to that Church in which they found life and peace, in which they seek usefulness and holiness. And what are these people willing to do, what can they do, towards getting what was the one purpose of their emigration—a Moravian congregation?

My brethren, I went to these people on whose history and condition I have been dwelling so long for religious and business purposes; and the business transacted, based on our common faith and aims, proceeded from several propositions that were made after a great mass of information, part of which only can here be detailed, had been gathered. These people are keen and practical, earnest and liberal. After careful consideration, and by formal vote, they agreed that should the Moravian Church in the United States decide to continue them in its connection and to develop the work in their behalf, they would do these things:

Four members at Bruederfeld will give five acres each at the point where their farms meet, which is a township cross-road in Townships 51 and 52, on Ranges 23 and 24, respectively; on which the congregation will erect a church and a parsonage, chiefly of log, to be completed in the Spring of 1896, and in connection with which a cemetery, a grove and a pasture will be laid out.

The members will buy a quarter section, a farm of 160 acres, which will be cultivated by the congregation to raise a revenue for defraying the expenses of the church establishment.

As soon as competent, they will deed the entire property, 180 acres, with all improvements they may make thereon to the Moravian Church of the United States.

Realizing the necessity of numerical strength and the desirability of immigrating at once if at all, they will encourage and assist to the utmost extent of their ability the colonization of the land in their vicinity by their relatives and fellow believers in Volhynia.

They express themselves as desirous of living out to the full the faith and practices of the Moravian Church, as its history, synods and authorities prescribe.

They changed the name of their settlement from Bruederthal to Bruederfeld, in order to avoid confusion, and will enter into negotiations with the Government for the establishment among them of a Post Office by the name of Bruederfeld.

Having secured unanimous and enthusiastic affirmations on these propositions, the opinion was ventured that the Provincial Elders' Conference and the Board of Church Extension would not only in all likelihood

supply them with a pastor, but also for the first year mainly provide his support.

The other congregation, Bruederheim, organized a month earlier, on May 6, 1895, was reached after a day's journey by farm wagon on Tuesday, November 19. The route taken was over the Victoria Trail which winds, after the fashion of such highways, in peculiarly pleasing lines through and around the copses, up the hillocks and down the hollows, over the ridges and across the prairie, scarcely ever for a hundred yards ahead in sight. Much of the land on either side is held by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company at a fixed price, and by speculators waiting for a rise. Homesteaders must go farther from terminal towns, and away from the beaten track. There, while not so convenient, the land is as good, and the prospects are as fair as anywhere. Small game is plentiful along the trail, traces of bear and deer are not infrequent, which with an occasional glimpse of either a coyote or an Indian looking on the intruder with puzzled, yet harmless mien, impresses a person with a lively sense of the frontier depths to which his journey has extended, and testifies to the silent force of that modern migration of nations which is welding the diverse races of the old world into the State and Church, the social and commercial life of the new world. As the night gathered more densely round us, it became an entertaining and instructive spectacle to watch far in the distance ahead or away to your side a little light, oft times the only possible light in the single window of a rude log cabin

which, out of sight of all other human habitations, was to some family the dearest spot on earth, and that served, like lanterns on the buoys in harbor channels, to guide the wayfarer toward his home.

We came upon Bruederheim, the other Moravian colony, and a Post Office, eighteen miles beyond Fort Saskatchewan, the northernmost post of the Canadian mounted police. The membership, some twenty families, also aggregating 50 communicants and about 100 souls, live in the two adjoining Townships 55 and 56, on Range 20, each on a quarter section, or 160 acres of land, from half a mile to five miles apart. These brethren have entered as homesteaders, and after three years' residence and cultivation will receive full title deeds to their property. The families were nearly all visited in their homes. It required thirty miles of traveling to call on 15 households. Many of these we found in poorer circumstances than those at Bruederfeld. Almost all of these brethren have enjoyed the aid of the Canadian Government. Their present surroundings and their experiences are of the same sort as those of the brethren at Bruederfeld. Impoverished and empty-handed, through Russian oppression, they came prepared to undergo both suffering and reverses, but trusting eventually to form a Moravian congregation, and therein to worship their Lord in the manner that was dear to their hearts. Everywhere the one lament was voiced — if only we be not cut off from the Moravian Church, if only we may here grow into such a congregation as we once thought within our reach in Volhynia, when the bigotry of

the Church, and the tyranny of the State crushed out its life. For the sweet ways and holy joys, for the blissful fellowship and the spiritual help of the Brethren's Church, we came hither. We pray God we may not be doomed to disappointment after all this sacrifice, all this journey, and all this hardship. As at Bruederfeld, so five services were held at Bruederheim, on Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday evenings and on Sunday morning and afternoon. Four meetings with the officials and the membership for the transaction of business were also held. Not only the services, the observations also, the experiences, the work and the results had at the settlement first visited were duplicated at Bruederheim. The propositions adopted by the congregation at Bruederfeld were communicated and most cordially endorsed. With only such modifications as their circumstances called for, the membership unanimously agreed to the same things their brethren had pledged. That is, briefly rehearsing:

The members at Bruederheim will secure the forty acres appropriated by Government from Homestead land to every congregation requesting it, for the uses of a church, a parsonage, a cemetery, a grove and a pasture.

They will erect thereon a church of hewn logs, of such size and style as shall be submitted by the authorities—if provided with those things which they have not the cash to purchase — such as hardware, windows and shingles.

They will secure a quarter section of land, 160 acres, place it under cultivation to raise a revenue for the expenses of the church establishment, and as soon as

competent will deed all property intended for church purposes to the proper corporation.

They will submit to whatever arrangement may be proposed for their direction, and for their development into a Moravian congregation, and they heartily and unanimously agree to foster emigration on the part of acquaintances and others with a view insuring numerical strength and permanence for their organization.

Doing this, it was intimated to them, also, as likely that the Provincial Elders' Conference and the Church Extension Board would mainly support in their colony for one year at least the best pastoral supply that could be secured.

This intimation about the first year's support is merely a personal opinion. It has no official value. Should friends of Church Extension ask: Where are the means to come from? I answer: Directly from the pockets of the people who love the Lord. If the sorrowful experience is impending that down at the bottom of those pockets there is no more money—not a cent—and that there are no means available which may be used to enter these opened doors, then I am prepared to advocate some radical measures—desperate, they may seem. When I think of the Home Mission fields, not a few, that we have been cultivating for a score of years, nay, nursing these two score years, when I recall some which for years on years have been drawing support from the general treasury — when I remember some churches having a voice in Synod who are keeping their heads above water only by forcing their minister's

under—when I reflect upon pastors consecrated to the proclamation of Truth who will sooner request a change or a dismissal than assume the responsibility of testifying to the death either by accident or murder of the charge they are serving — I tell you, my soul waxes wroth within me. The Moravian Church is not slow to enter upon new, difficult, expensive work — on the contrary we are enterprising, sometimes daring, even reckless in beginning projects; but we are too set in the face of failure; we are stubbornly disinclined to acknowledge mistakes. We are not ready enough to discern a blunder, not wise, often not manly, enough to retire, to surrender, when we are played out or beaten, when we stand no show, or are not wanted. We must abandon this dogged perseverance. We must discard the fallacy that we are destined—though we act as if we were doomed—to go only to the destitute, or to take up only with forlorn hopes. We must put ourselves into positions in which we may both grow larger and get stronger, that we may do greater and better things in the Kingdom. I ask you, has not the day come to discontinue the operations which are yielding us no returns and to find and furnish fields in which we have a living chance? Is it not time for some one to act as church coroner, to impanel a jury and to render a verdict on the fact and cause of the death of some congregations whose bodies may still be intact, but whose life has gone, whose spirit has flown? If — if — the Church really can not do more than it is doing, then — then — I say, let us have a funeral, a tearless funeral, or several, somewhere, and soon. Certainly nothing,

especially not corpses calling for an inquest, nothing should prevent the Church from entering upon a territory where it is yearned for, where there is room, where there is prospect. Properly cultivated, I see in these Canadian colonies the nucleus of an additional district of the American Moravian Church, I would call it the Alberta District. In twenty-five years, for the settlement of this continent is proceeding more rapidly now than was the case a century ago, we may have there as strong a Moravian center, as we now have in Wisconsin, or in Ohio, or in New York, or in North Carolina, or in Pennsylvania, excepting only the endowments. Having spent a month on this subject exclusively, my mind is made up. I say this, and I say it to my colleagues in office, I say it to my congregation, I say it to the Provinces of the Church concerned, I say it in the pulpit and in the papers, publicly and privately: Colonize along the valley of the North Saskatchewan with Moravians such as have come from Volhynia; place an energetic, efficient minister in charge of the work there at once, and wait on the Lord—wait, I say, on the Lord. Wonders will be wrought!

* * * * * *

The official report of the visit to Alberta by the Rev. Morris W. Leibert was received by the Provincial Elders' Conference and by the Provincial Board of Church Extension, at whose request this important visitation was made, on December 7, 1895. A wide field of usefulness and activity is presented to the Moravian Church among the Volhynian colonists in Canada, and the duty of endeavoring to develop the

same is imperative. In accordance with previous action taken by the Boards the following resolutions were adopted on December 10th and 12th by the Provincial Elders' Conference and the Provincial Board of Church Extension:

1. *Resolved*, That, having assumed the care of the Moravians in Alberta, we will develop the work as a special enterprise of the American Province under the following regulations:

a. The churches organized will have no representation at any Synod until formally accepted as congregations of this Province by the next Provincial Synod, to which the Provincial Elders' Conference may invite their pastor, if such action be justified by the progress of the work;

b. Though not entitled, as yet, to the same privileges as given to other churches of this Province, they accept the decision of the Provincial Church authorities as binding on them, and require every new member to subscribe to the Brotherly Agreement and Rules and Regulations of the several congregations, as has been done by the present membership;

c. The members of these churches shall faithfully carry out the plan agreed upon for building churches and parsonages, and providing and cultivating land for the support of their church establishment, and make it their aim to become self-supporting as soon as possible;

d. The funds needed for the support of this enterprise shall be raised by special solicitation addressed to our churches in all the Provinces of the Unity, any surplus over and above the assistance required by the Alberta congregations being used to enable other needy Moravians in Volhynia to join their brethren in Canada;

e. After this work shall have become self-supporting, any balance remaining on hand shall be applied to the establishment of Moravian churches at other points in the Dominion of Canada, or donated to the work of Church Extension elsewhere.

2. *Resolved,* That a pastor be appointed to the charge of the work in Alberta as speedily as possible, and the Church Extension Board will advance whatever funds may be needed.

3. *Resolved,* That the report of Bro. Leibert's visitation be published in pamphlet form, and be distributed as widely as possible, with the action of the Provincial Elders' Conference and of the Board of Church Extension, as also a brief appeal for donations appended.

* * * * * *

It is perfectly plain to all that there are rather too many causes in the Moravian Church clamoring for help. But it will not be denied that the claims of Bruederfeld and Bruederheim, in Alberta, at this time presented, can as little be disregarded as they might have been hastened on, or as they may be deferred.

Many persons are laboring under obligations which will prevent them, willing as they otherwise are, from lending a hand in this work. Others may be able to render but little towards its support. Yet there are good people enough who by combining their resources and placing them at the disposal of the Provincial Boards, which have taken charge of this enterprise, will make it possible to begin operations forthwith.

We ask all who see the advisability of seizing the present opportunity, and who are in a position to help this cause without harm to other objects, to be both lib-

eral and prompt. If cheerful, generous givers will this year by special effort raise two thousand dollars, they will provide the impetus needed for beginning this new work which to all appearance is so full of promise. Let those who propose doing anything do something now. Sums so given may not be as large as it is desirable to make them. More may easily be given later. Let those who can vote an appropriation, or those who can hand over a cash amount without much personal inconvenience, or with a considerable degree of satisfaction to themselves, do so without delay.

The funds thus received will not be devoted to the promotion of ecclesiastical pauperism. Under the blessing of God they will go to help those who are helping themselves. Our Church colonists in Canada provide the land, erect the buildings, encourage emigration, organize activities—and we simply step to their side and say: "Brethren, we will give you whatever you, well-nigh submerged in early settlers' struggles, cannot afford, roofing, hardware, furniture and the like; we will see to it that for a year or two, at least, the pastor sent you will be assured a suitable salary; we will place in his possession the means he may require to traverse this field of labor, and to serve the membership."

It is for the Moravian Church to indicate whether this shall be done; and to determine whether it shall be done immediately, enthusiastically, and thoroughly. The case is fully before the Church. Either let there be a silence that may be felt, or let there be a ringing response, sharp and strong, swift and sweet. The people are the pilot. Let the signal be: "Go ahead!"

The Provincial Elders' Conference requests that all gifts for Bruederfeld and Bruederheim may be sent to the Rev. Robert de Schweinitz, *Treasurer*, Bethlehem, Pa.

* * * * * *

It only remains to announce the fact that the Rev. Clement Hoyler has accepted appointment as pastor of the congregations at Bruederfeld and Bruederheim. Severing his pastoral relations at Elizabeth, N. J., on January 12, he will be in full charge of the Alberta work by the middle of February, 1896. In this new and wide field of activity, Bro. Andrew Lilge, licensed to preach, will serve as pastor's assistant.